Central American NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Central American Group of the Spanish Main Society.

Editor: Michael P Birks, Flixton Girls' School, Urmston, Manchester M31 3DR, England 061-747 5924 (Home)

Volume II, Issue No. 24 June 1986

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

There will be a meeting of the Central American Group on Saturday 17th May at the Victory Services Club, starting at 10.30 a.m. and going on until about 4.00 p.m.. Through a series of unfortunate mishaps the date of this meeting has been previously incorrectly announced. The date is DEFINITELY 17th May.

We look forward to a good attendance from Central American members for the varied programme with which we hope to entertain all Spanish Main members and their friends. Displays will include:- "Nicaragua" by David Kilner; "Panama" by Leslie Wilkinson; "Canal Zone" by John Evans; "Mexico" by Douglas Bayliss; "Costa Rica Postcards" by H C Bailey and "Costa Rican Official Mail" by the organiser Dr Richard Saundry. All who plan to attend are also invited to bring along any special items they would like to discuss or to try to find out more about. The object of the displays is to provide interesting information and hopefully to help members with their collections of Central America, as well as to provide Spanish Main members with an enjoyable meeting.

A successful Spanish Main meeting was held in Manchester on 5th April, and we hope this will be the start of annual meetings in the North.

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the Victory Services Club on Saturday 14th June. Discussion of future plans for the Central American Group will be on the agenda. Overseas members are asked to write in with any positive suggestions as also are inland members who will be unable to attend the meeting.

52 St Leonards Road, Newton Abbot
Devon, TQ12 1JX, England

JOHN FOSBERY
President, The Spanish Main

We are pleased to announce that Kilian Nathan of Zurich, has been awarded the Tilleard Medal by the Royal Philatelic Society, for his display of Nicaragua before the Society on 28 March 1985.

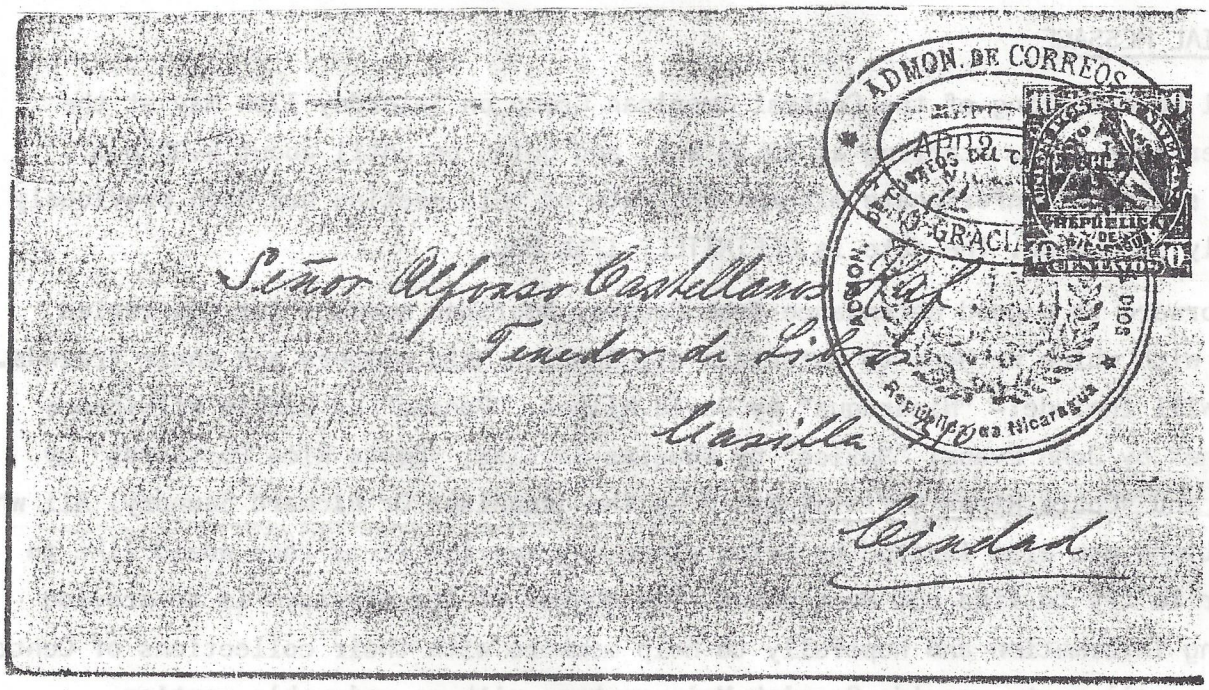
We are further pleased to announce that our President, John Fosbery has been invited to sign the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists at the British Philatelic Federation's Congress at Norwich.

Our congratulations to them both. MPB

THE 1889 "5/CENTAVOS/5" POSTAL STATIONERY OVERPRINT (H & G 3)

by D N KILNER

In 1889, the 1888 10 centavos violet postal stationery envelope was surcharged "5/CENTAVOS/5". As all records of this period have been destroyed, we do not know whether this surcharge was official or unofficial, but I have always wondered why the surcharge took the form it did - ie one of three lines instead of a single line "5 CENTAVOS".



5
CENTAVOS
5

1890 saw the start of the Seebeck contract and the surcharge was probably intended to see the postal authorities through until then. By surcharging the 10 centavos envelopes with the three line surcharge, its intended use is not clear. The envelope can be found used for the foreign letter rate, although it may have been intended soley for internal use or both.

I have never seen this item used in 1889, but Stanley Gibbons Magazine of 20 August, 1890, quoted the following report which appeared in the Metropolitan Philatelist:-

> "Some time since there was considerable comment excited by the appearance of a 10c envelope of Nicaragua surcharged 5c, and doubts were thrown upon its character. We have had one of these envelopes by us for some time, waiting for some authentic information to turn up but of late no mention of the matter. The envelope in question bears a regular envelope stamp of Nicaragua, 10c purple; over this is surcharged:-
>
> 5
> CENTAVOS
> 5

in red ink, the word CENTAVOS measuring 2 x 200mm. The envelope is of the ordinary commercial size 89 x 116mm, and is made up of blue paper, laid diagonally. It was mailed at Leon, Nicaragua, on November 27th, 1889, and received in the regular course of business at New York on December 14th, 1889, by a firm with whom our friend, Mr John W Dickinson is connected, it being through his courtesy that we are able to lay the facts before our readers. The postmark is over the surcharge and the envelope was treated in the New York post office as fully prepaid, although the regular postage from Nicaragua to the United States is ten centavos. It therefore at once becomes apparent that, as far as this particular envelope is concerned, it is "straight goods", and not one of those delicious morsels so frequently dished up for philatelic palates."

This was followed by a further report on the same envelope in the same magazine on September 20th, 1890, as follows:-

"Nicaragua - We have received a specimen of the 10c envelope of 1888, surcharged "5 - CENTAVOS - 5" in three lines in red, a variety which we believe has been known for some months past, but about which information seems still desirable. The editor of the Metropolitan Philatelist appears to regard the evidence which we quoted last month as in favour of the genuine nature of the surcharge. It would seem rather, however, to prove that the copy in question had passed for its original value, and that the Post Office authorities regarded the surcharge as a little piece of harmless eccentricity on the part of the user! However, we do not say the thing is bad.

Envelope. 5c, in red on 10c, violet on blue."

As can be seen by these reports, on the whole, both editors thought the item to be genuine, but whether official or unofficial it is not said, but the postal authorities had treated the item as having paid the foreign letter rate of 10 centavos.

Could it be possible, that the intention of the postal authorities when the envelope was meant to be used internally, ie at the 5 centavos letter rate, that by the simple expedient of obliterating one of the two figure 5's (by pen stroke or other means) the value could be reduced to the required rate?

I think that the period of use of this surcharge must have been very short indeed- probably from October/November 1889 to the start of the Seebeck contract in 1890. In fact the item received in New York could have been a first use. The likelihood of seeing one of these envelopes used internally or externally in 1889 is extremely

remote (though it was authorised for use by the postal authorities or postmaster some 19 years later in 1909 - again whether officially or unofficially is not known) so the status and mothod of use of this item must remain one of conjecture - unless some member has one in his collection, in which case the theory might be proved or disproved.

Correspondence, via the editor, is invited on this (or any other) subject.

Acknowledgement: Stanley Gibbons Limited Magazine 1890.

WILL ROGERS OVERPRINT

In issue No 12 (June 1983) we asked for information about a Telegraphic surcharge which had been found on Will Rogers stamps. A new member, Senor Fernando Grijalva, of California has written to us with an explanation for these surcharges.

He writes:-

> "While reading some back issues of CAN, I found that there had been questions about the Will Rogers stamps overprinted "Timbre Telegrafico Semana de Comunicaciones/Vale 10 centavos". The information that I have is that these stamps were on sale for one week each year for the benefit of the communications department, and that during the week all letters paid double in price. The proceeds went to the employees fund for the benefit of the aged."

Unfortunately Senor Grijalva is unable to explain the significance of the coloured letters, A, B and G. Perhaps some other reader has something they would like to add which has come to light since the original request for information was published.

MPB

SPANISH MAIN Annual subscription £5 (UK), £6 (Europe), $15 (elsewhere) The subscription includes four copies of Mainsheet, and also private treaty lists and auction catalogues.

Secretary: Brian Moorhouse, PO Box 105, PETERBOROUGH PE3 8TQ, England.

The society also runs two specialised groups, the Central American and the Chile groups. The subscription to each group is £3 (UK) or $7 elsewhere, to Spanish Main members, or $10 to non-members (Overseas subscriptions only). This includes four copies of the respective Newsletter, by airmail.

THE POSTAGE DUE STAMPS OF EL SALVADOR 1895 - 1900

by RUSSELL HAYDON

(Based on notes in the collection of the late Bernard Davies)

The postage due stamps were printed by the Hamilton Bank Note Company of New York to fulfill governments orders, and were issued on 1st January 1895. In the Seebeck contract of 1889, there was no specific mention of these stamps but under the terms of the contract, Seebeck had to supply the government with any stamps they required. He was requested to supply postage dues in 1894, and did so.

There were 8 values in each set, that is the 1c, 2c, 3c, 5c, 10c, 15c, 25c and 50c values with an identical design showing a numeral on a shield shaped background. They are perforated 12, and engraved and printed on white wove paper. There were seven issues of which the first five are considered genuine. The sixth issue is considered bogus and the seventh issue was prepared for issue but never actually issued, although it appeared later with the wheel overprint.

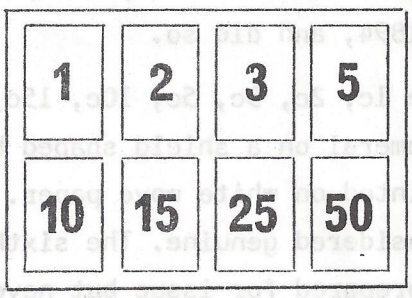
Originals are regarded as the stamps that were sent to El Salvador or the surplus ones that Seebeck kept in New York. The reprints are regarded as those printed from the original plates by Seebeck or the Calman Brothers after the issue was demonetized.

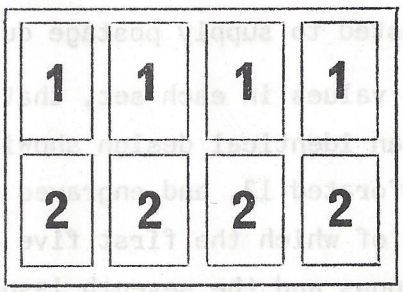
The following details permit the originals to be separated from the reprints:-

		Originals	Reprints
1895	SG D107-114 Scott J1-8	1. White thin paper	Thick yellowish paper with or without wmk
		2. Vertical mesh	Vertical mesh
		3. Clear olive green	Blurred yellow-olive
1896	SG D150A-157A Scott J9-16	1. Thin paper	Thick paper
		2. Horizontal mesh	Vertical mesh
		3. Watermark Cap of Liberty upright	Watermark sideways
1896	SG D150B-157B Scott J17-24	1. Thin paper	Thick paper
		2. Horizontal mesh	Vertical mesh
		3. Sharp, clear impression	Blurred impression
1897	SG D256-263 Scott J25-32	1. Thin paper	Thick paper
		2. Horizontal mesh	Vertical mesh
		3. No watermark	Watermarked sideways or unwatermarked

		Originals	Reprints
1898	SG D302-309	1. Thin paper	Thick paper
	Scott J33-40	2. Horizontal mesh	Vertical mesh
		3. No watermark	Watermark sideways or unwatermarked

The sheet consisted of 8 panes each of 25 stamps. All values were represented on the sheet, and a second sheet was produced of the more frequently used values. The sheets layouts were as follows:-





The same plates were used for all the issues of the Postage Due stamps, the colour only being changed each year.

Forgeries of all four issues exist. They are lithographed (rather crudely) on very soft, white paper perforated 12½. I can confirm the existence of the following forgeries:-

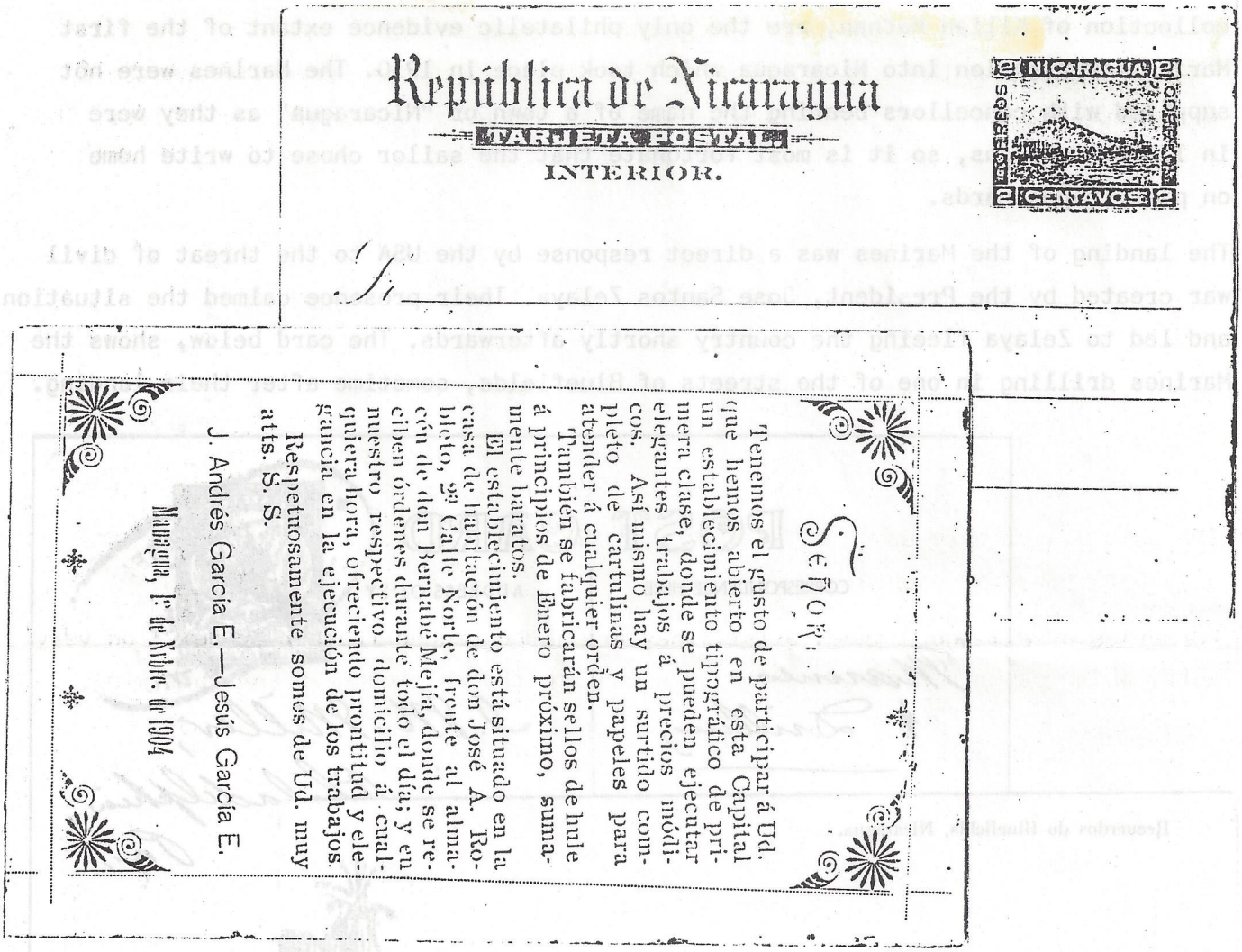
	Olive	Red	Blue	Violet
1c	x		x	
2c	x			x
3c	x		x	
5c				x
10c				x
15c		x	x	
25c		x	x	
50c			x	x

With so many reprints, why were the forgeries produced? When were the forgeries printed, and by whom? Are there any more?

We would be pleased to receive correspondence on this (or any other) subject, via the editor.

NICARAGUA: AN EARLY ADVERTISING CARD by MICHAEL P BIRKS

At a recent postcard fair in Sheffield, I came across a 2c Asenjo postal stationery card, with an advertisement for a printing establishment, on the back. Presumably the advertisement is all their own work. It has been executed in two colours, the text in blue, and the rest in red.


República de Nicaragua
TARJETA POSTAL
INTERIOR.
NICARAGUA
CORREOS
2 CENTAVOS 2
Señor:
Tenemos el gusto de participar á Ud. que hemos abierto en esta Capital un establecimiento tipográfico de primera clase, donde se pueden ejecutar elegantes trabajos á precios módicos. Así mismo hay un surtido completo de cartulinas y papeles para atender á cualquier orden.
También se fabricarán sellos de hule á principios de Enero próximo, sumamente baratos.
El establecimiento está situado en la casa de habitación de don José A. Robleto, 2ª Calle Norte, frente al almacén de don Bernabé Mejía, donde se reciben órdenes durante todo el día; y en nuestro respectivo domicilio á cualquiera hora, ofreciendo prontitud y elegancia en la ejecución de los trabajos.
Respetuosamente somos de Ud. muy atts. S. S.
J. Andrés García E.—Jesús García E.
Managua, 1º de Nbre. de 1904

"Sir: We are pleased to inform you that we have opened in this capital a printing establishment, of a first class nature, where elegant work at moderate prices can be carried out. We have a complete range of card and papers to fulfil any order.

In addition, from the beginning of January next we shall make rubber stamps which will be very cheap.

The business is situated in the house of don Jose A Robleto, 2ª Calle Norte, opposite don Bernabé Mejía's store where orders shall be taken throughout the day; and in our own office at any time, offering speed and elegance in the execution of all orders.

We await your order respectfully.

J Andrés Garcia E - Jesús Garcia E. Managua 1st November 1904."

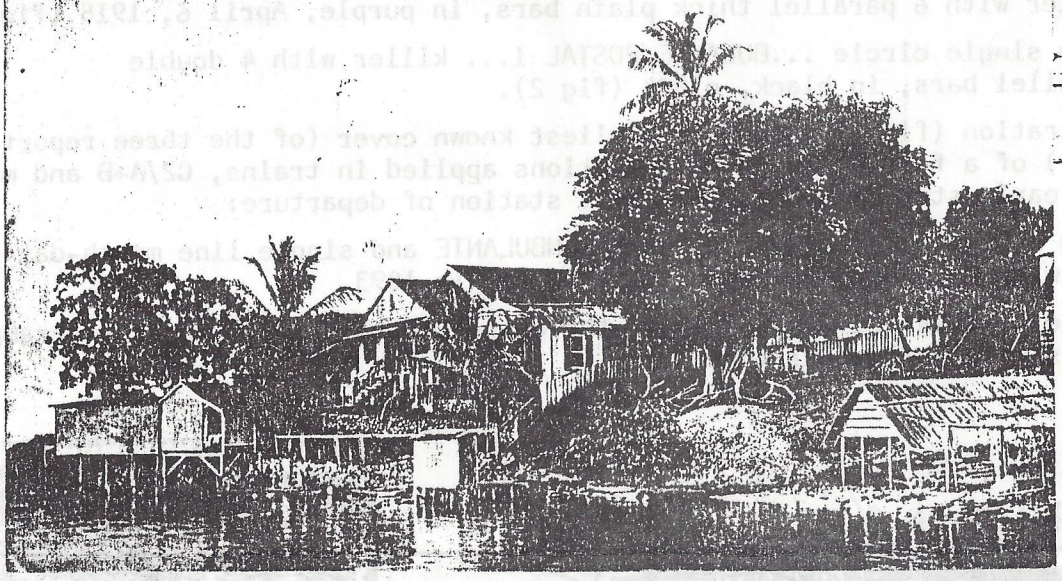
POSTCARD PAGE by MICHAEL P BIRKS

This issue's postcards have spread to two pages because of their importance. The two cards on the opposite page are two of three cards sent by a sailor on board USS Paduam, to his mother, from Bluefields in 1910. The three cards, from the collection of Kilian Nathan, are the only philatelic evidence extant of the first Marine intervention into Nicaragua which took place in 1910. The Marines were not supplied with cancellors bearing the name of a town or "Nicaragua" as they were in later campaigns, so it is most fortunate that the sailor chose to write home on picture postcards.

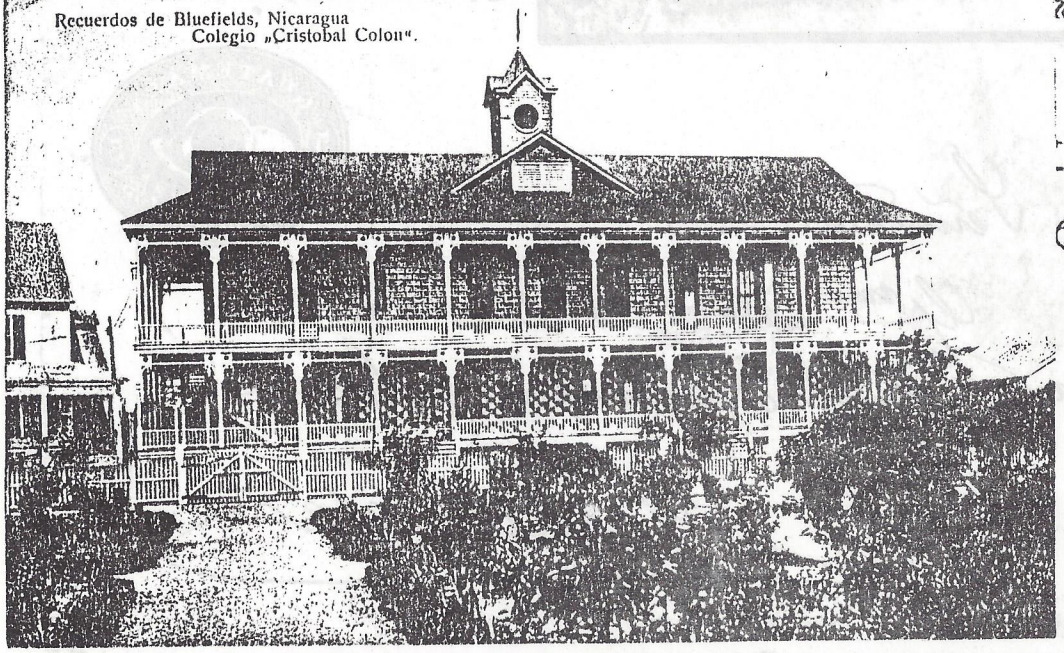
The landing of the Marines was a direct response by the USA to the threat of civil war created by the President, Jose Santos Zelaya. Their presence calmed the situation and led to Zelaya fleeing the country shortly afterwards. The card below, shows the Marines drilling in one of the streets of Bluefields, sometime after their landing.

Although generally believed that the landing in Bluefields was the first intervention by US Marines in Nicaragua, this is not the case, and in our next issue we shall show you philatelic evidence to prove a US presence in C19th.

Recuerdos de Bluefields, Nicaragua.



Recuerdos de Bluefields, Nicaragua
Colegio „Cristobal Colon".

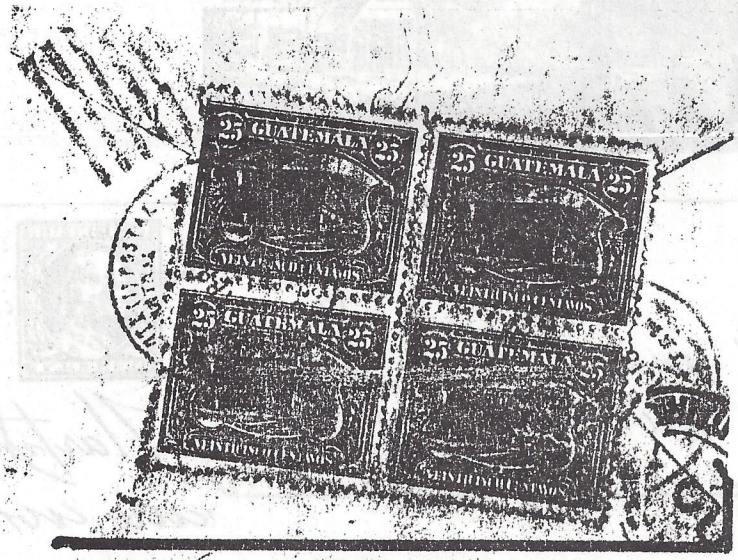


FURTHER NOTES ON GUATEMALA AMBULANTES by Mrs CECILE GRUSON

Herewith a few additions to Douglas Bayliss' very interesting article in C.A.N. No. 20 of June 1985:-

1. "TRENES LOCALES": I have an example dated 1889.
2. "AMB. POSTAL F.C.C." G2/I: might it be an unlisted "SIQUINALA A SAN JOSE"?
3. "AMBULANTE POSTAL" duplex with bar killers. There are several of those unlisted in G2, and quite different from G2/K:
   - 30mm single circle *AMBULANTE (1) POSTAL - F.C. CENTRAL* GUATEMALA, killer with 6 parallel thick plain bars, in purple, April 6, 1918 (fig 1).
   - 31mm single circle ...BULANTE POSTAL 1... killer with 4 double parallel bars, in black, c1924 (fig 2).
4. Illustration (fig 3) shows the earliest known cover (of the three reported so far) of a forerunner of cancellations applied in trains, G2/A+B and maybe other early strikes being applied at station of departure:
   - 40mm single circle AGENCIA POSTAL/AMBULANTE and single line month-day-year, one with hour below: purple in 1892, red in 1893.

   All the strikes are very poor and the device looks crude. Are other examples of this unlisted cancel known?



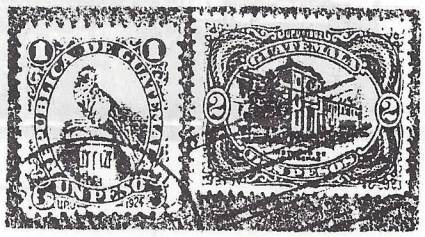
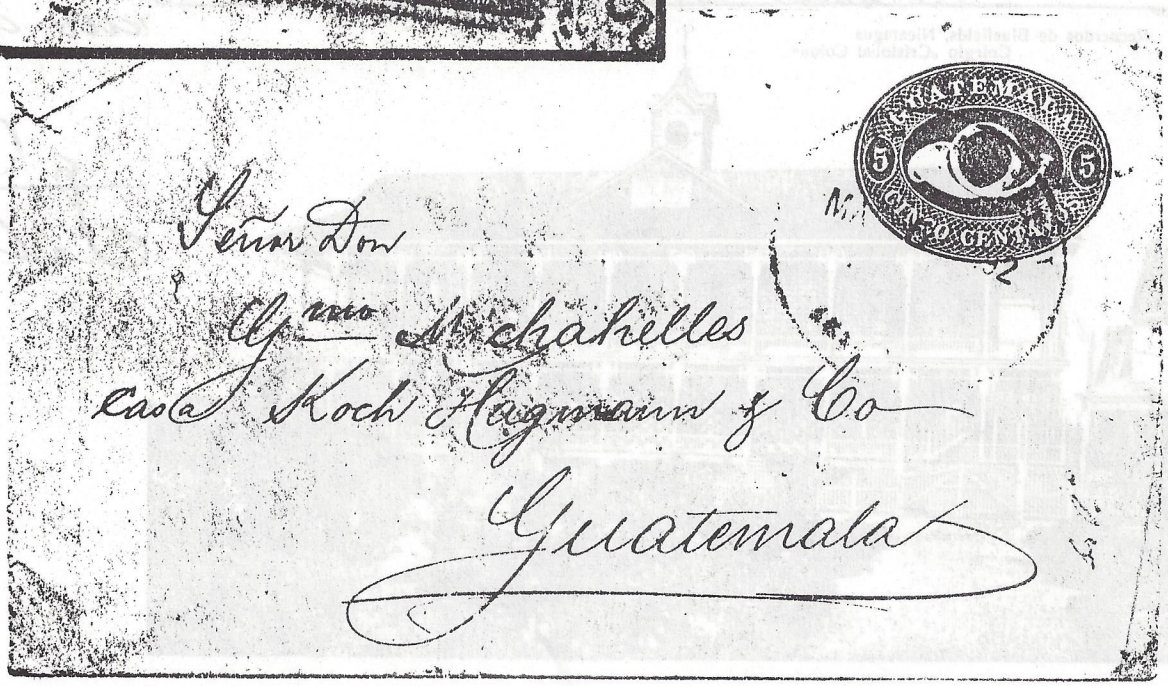


fig 1. ↑

← fig 2.

fig 3. ↓



PANAMA

Derek Palmer sent me a copy of the Consular Trade report for Panama for 1881. It contains plenty of background information on commerce and manufacturers and if you would like a copy, write me. Derek, knowing my interest in the origin of place names points out the report says "PANAMA" derives from an Indian word meaning "plenty of fish". I do not know the source of the names "GUATEMALA" or "HONDURAS"; maybe a reader will write and tell me.

J.F.

GUATEMALA COLLECTORS - ATTENTION!

The International Society for Guatemala Collectors is based in the United States. Dues paid during the period May to August are $11 and include dues for all the following year, as well as copies of the quarterly journal "El Quetzal". Application forms can be obtained from Senora Mae Vignola, 105 - 22nd Avenue, San Francisco, California, CA 94121, USA. The Society is long established and has already published the two standard books on GUATEMALA. Guatemala I is still available at $30, and a reprint of Volume II has just been produced at $50. Both are exclusive of postage and enquiries should be sent to J C Andrews, PO Box 298, Conway, NH 03818, USA. Jim also publishes "La Tienda el Quetzal" an excellent occasional list of literature on Central America, which can be sent post free to any interested reader.

DESPERATELY NEEDED!

Your editor is DESPERATE to acquire unused copies of the 5c, 15c, 20c and 50c Waterlow Arms type with the Costa Atlantica B overprint. Any offers which include any of these stamps in UNUSED condition would be welcomed. Since the stamps are required for an International exhibit, the stamps must be for sale. PLEASE help!

NICOLAS SANSON

In 1700, when pocket atlases had reached a certain popularity, Francois Halma of Amsterdam published a small atlas of maps by Nicolas Sanson entitled - "L'Amerique en Plusieurs Cartes nouvelles et exactes". These maps are in exceptionally beautiful full colouring and are heightened with gold. A copy of the map showing the "AUDIENCE de GUATIMALA" comes from our President's collection, and is illustrated overleaf.

Nicolas Sanson (1600-1667) was the pioneer in France in making world atlases; until nearly the end of the 17th century Sanson's atlases held the field. He was assisted in Abbeville by his sons, Nicolas, Guillaume and Adrien from whom Alexis Jaillot took over all their materials in 1695.

Septentrion
280
285
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AUDIENCE DE
GUATIMALA
Par N. Sanson d'Abbeville
Geogr Ordin du Roy
MER DU SUD, ou PACIFICQUE.
MER DE NORT
GOLFE DE HONDURAS
Golfe de Guanaios
Golfe de Panama
Golfe de Parita
Golfe de Nicoya
Golfe de Salins
Golfe de Nicoya
Golfe de Nicoya
Golfe de Nicoya